

Jury Awards Patler \$15,000 Damages In Nazi 'Vendetta'

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John Patler, the convicted assassin of American Nazi Party leader George Lincoln Rockwell, yesterday was awarded \$15,000 in damages from a former fellow Nazi who had accused Patler of stealing the gun that killed Rockwell.

In arguing the Arlington Circuit Court suit against Robert A. Lloyd III, Patler's attorney said the gun theft charge was false and was part of a "vendetta" against Patler that included threatening telephone calls and other harassment that amounted to "malicious persecution."

The jury of two Negro women and five white men deliberated more than two hours Wednesday night and an hour yesterday before returning the verdict. Patler had sued for \$100,000, but his attorney, Thomas J. Harrigan, asked only for \$50,000 in oral arguments.

Judge Charles S. Russell postponed imposing the judgment in the civil suit for 10 days to permit motions to be filed. If he thinks it proper, he may overturn the verdict or reduce the amount of money Lloyd, publications chief for the National Socialist White Peoples party must pay Patler.

The verdict includes \$5,000 in compensatory damages (to reimburse Patler for money spent in fighting the charge of stealing the gun) and \$10,000 in exemplary damages (to punish Lloyd for allegedly "persecuting" Patler).

At one point Wednesday night the jurors told Judge Russell they were in a "stalemate" but the judge instructed them to continue deliberations.

Lloyd swore out a warrant for Patler's arrest on the gun charge on Feb. 8, 1968, the same day that Patler gained release from jail on \$40,000 bond awaiting appeal of his conviction of slaying Rockwell.

from a shopping center rooftop on Aug. 25, 1967.

Patler was sentenced to 20 years. His appeal now is pending before the Virginia Supreme Court Appeals.

Harrigan contended to the get Patler returned to jail. the warrant in an attempt to jury that Lloyd had obtained

Two weeks after the warrant was issued, Arlington Commonwealth's Attorney William J. Hassan declined to prosecute the theft charge against Patler, saying that Rockwell's murder trial had cost the public \$10,000 and that he did not wish to spend additional funds on a related charge.

Lloyd testified, both at Patler's trial and in the present case that he loaned the gun, a 7.63-mm Mauser semi-automatic pistol, to Patler in 1964 and was told by Patler that it had been stolen when he asked for its return. Patler has denied ever having the weapon.

Both Patler and his wife, Alice, testified that Lloyd and two other Nazis, Matthias Koehl (who succeeded Rockwell as head of the group) and Christopher Vidnjevich, a party leader in Chicago, harassed them with telephone calls.

They said Nazis shouted derogatory remarks as they drove by the Patler home and forced them to move to McDowell, Va., to escape "persecution." Among other things, Harrigan said, Patler, born John Patsalos, was called a "greasy Greek."

Patler originally named Koehl and Vidnjevich as defendants along with Lloyd but Judge Russell dismissed them, saying there was insufficient evidence they conspired with Lloyd to secure the warrants.

Lloyd served as his own attorney after Judge Russell refused to postpone the hearing to permit Lloyd's lawyer, who said he had been hired Tuesday, to prepare a defense.